[147 cont.]

775 unsafe and may be seen, especially on damp nights, as fiery, or at least with fire in their armpits. The belief of the Reef Islanders rests on similar ideas of destruction and revitalization, despite superficial differences (9). According to it, the soul first goes

9. O'Ferrall in J.A.I., XXXIV (1904), p. 229. Joest in Baessler, p. 389, categorically denies the existence of any kind of ideas about the transmigration of souls -- a very vague conception.

to a place [148] where other spirits put it in the center and dance around it, then drop it in a deep waterhole where it is devoured by a large fish. The blood that spurts out of the fish revitalizes it, however, and it goes to another place. Persons who have fallen in battle become winged spirits, but other do not (1).

1. See footnote 9 above.

769 On Ndeni the fear of ghosts is very pronounced; Joest reports that the natives are very afraid of the dark and that when they covered the windows of his house with mats they sang loudly, perhaps to give themselves courage, perhaps to drive away the [828] spirits. Nightmares are attributed to an evil spirit that sits on one's chest (2).

2. Joest in Baessler, pp. 388f.

In the interior of the main island and on Vanikoro (3),

3. Cf. p. 141.

the exhuming and preservation of the skulls points to a general worship of the dead. In the coastal regions of Ndeni and on the [778] Reef Islands only the souls of esteemed persons are worshiped